

Cinema Rhapsodies

The Musical Genius of Victor Young



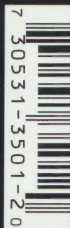
Hit Parade
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Cinema Rhapsodies: The Musical Genius of Victor Young

Performed, Written & Arranged by Victor Young & His Orchestra (EXCEPT WHERE NOTED)

ALL TRACKS MONO (except TRUE STEREO where noted) DIGITALLY REMASTERED FOR HIGHEST QUALITY SOUND

1. AROUND THE WORLD (Main Theme from "Around The World in 80 Days")
Chart #13, 1957 **STEREO** ORIGINAL 45 RPM SINGLE VERSION
2. INDIA COUNTRY SIDE (from "Around The World in 80 Days") **STEREO**
3. THE HIGH AND THE MIGHTY Chart #6, 1954
4. WRITTEN ON THE WIND Orch. Conducted by Alfred Newman
5. ALONE AT LAST (from "Something To Live For")
6. MOONLIGHT SERENADE (Summer Love) (from "The Star")
7. LA VIE EN ROSE Chart #27, 1950
8. CHANGE OF HEART (from "Forever Female")
9. WHEN I FALL IN LOVE (from "One Minute To Zero") **STEREO**
Performed by RICHARD HAYMAN & His Orchestra
10. (Themes from) SAMSON AND DELILAH
11. THE CALL OF THE FAR-AWAY HILLS (Theme from "Shane")
12. MY MOTHER (from "The Quiet Man")
13. MY FOOLISH HEART
14. EVERYTHING I DO (Wintertime of Love) (from "Thunderbirds")
15. LOVE LETTERS Performed by RICHARD HAYMAN & His Orchestra **STEREO**
16. EAST OF EDEN
17. (Theme from) FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS
18. GOLDEN EARRINGS (Prelude)
19. RUBY (from "Ruby Gentry") Chart #20, 1953
20. AUTUMN LEAVES Chart #52, 1955
21. (Theme from) THE MEDIC (Blue Star)
22. STELLA BY STARLIGHT (from "The Uninvited") Performed by RICHARD HAYMAN & His Orchestra **STEREO**



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Victor Young, 1954

Cinema Rhapsodies: The Musical Genius of Victor Young

VICTOR YOUNG looked like a prizefighter and composed like an angel – not only prolifically, but also with a seemingly inexhaustible store of memorable melodies. “To the casual observer,” wrote Tony Thomas in *Music For The Movies*, “it seemed that all Young had to do was sit at the piano and let the melodies fall out of his sleeves.” Young wrote, conducted or supervised the scoring of some 300 films, charted over two-dozen hit singles in the United States, and composed some of the most enduring songs of the 20th Century.

Many of the songs and love themes from Victor Young’s film scores are still a part of our music repertoire. His first success was the 1928 pop song “Sweet Sue, Just You,” followed by a vast number of hits that have now become standards: “Love Letters,” “Stella By Starlight,” “Can’t We Talk It Over,” “My Foolish Heart,” “Golden Earrings,” “When I Fall In Love,” “Blue Star (The ‘Medic’ Theme)” and “Around the World” are but a few.

Nominated for 22 Academy Awards for his film music scores, and, on two separate occasions, nominated four times in a single year, Young holds the record for the most Oscar nominations without a win. He lived hard and died too young, composing exquisite melodies until the very end of his life, and finally received his only Oscar posthumously in 1957 for his score of *Around the World In 80 Days* (1956).

Young ranks among the great film music composers of the Golden Age of Hollywood with Max Steiner, Erich Korngold, Alfred Newman, and

Dimitri Tiomkin, yet is lamentably underrepresented on CD. This compilation celebrates his boundless and bountiful creativity by collecting the highlights of his orchestral instrumental recordings from the ‘50s, a time when Young was at his artistic peak as a composer and arranger.

Albert Victor Young was born to a Polish family in a tenement district of Chicago on August 8, 1899, not 1900 as widely reported. The family name was originally Jablon but changed to Young upon coming to America. His father, William, was a tenor with the Chicago Opera Company, so it was natural for the young Victor to begin playing an instrument – the violin – at the age of six. Victor’s mother died when he was ten years old and his father was unable to care for the children because his work required that he go on the road to perform, so William sent Victor and his sister Helen to live with their wealthy grandfather in Warsaw, Poland.

With their grandfather’s financial support, Victor and his sister enrolled as students at the Imperial Conservatory in Warsaw where he studied violin and Helen studied piano. One of Victor’s instructors was Roman Statkowsky, a former student of Tchaikovsky, and it was he who had the strongest influence on Victor, whose own future scoring would be characterized by long melodic lines and the use of stringed instruments. The music of the Romantic Era, particularly that of Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff, made a tremendous impression on Young and guided his melodic sensibility; when he later moved into



COLUMBIA PICTURES SCORING SOUNDSTAGE, EARLY 1950S (PHOTO: WILLIAM GRAY COLLECTION)

pop music, there is no evidence that he looked to any of his pop contemporaries for cues or inspiration.

After graduating from the conservatory with a Diploma of Merit, Young made his debut as a solo violinist with the Warsaw Philharmonic and was very well received. A wealthy benefactor, Josef Goldfeder, was so impressed that he gave Victor a priceless 1730 Guarnerius violin, the instrument that he continued to play as an adult in America. The onset of WWI interrupted his career, but after the Armistice he returned to America, arriving in New York in February of 1920. For the rest of the year he lived from hand-to-mouth until, at 21, he made his American debut as a violinist

at Orchestra Hall in Chicago. Young was offered \$500 per week to play in vaudeville, but when he learned that he could not include any classical music in the performance, he tore up his contract. He soon reconsidered, though, and moved into the popular music sphere by joining the Dan Russo / Ted Fio Rito orchestra as an arranger and violinist. He joined Ben Pollack and His Californians later that year and recorded for RCA Victor in Chicago with both bands.

In 1922 he moved to Los Angeles to be with his fiancée, Rita Kinel, who had arranged an audition for him with Hollywood impresario Sid Grauman

to play violin at Grauman’s Chinese Theater on Hollywood Boulevard. A year later, Young was married and held a position as Concertmaster of the Central Park Theater in Chicago, the anchor theatre in the Balban & Katz chain of movie theatres (every Balban & Katz theatre had an orchestra to accompany the silent films).

During 1928 he wrote his first hit song, “Sweet Sue,” with words by vaudeville producer and director Will J. Harris. Later with long-time partner and lyricist Ned Washington, Young wrote the standards “Ghost Of A Chance,” “Love Me Tonight,” “Love Is The Thing,” and “Can’t We Talk It Over?” In collaboration with lyricist



VICTOR YOUNG (LEFT) AT 20TH CENTURY-FOX, 1955, SCORING *THE TALL MEN*. AT RIGHT IS VOCAL DIRECTOR KEN DARBY (PHOTO: WILLIAM GRAY COLLECTION)

Sam Lewis, he composed "Street Of Dreams," "Too Late" and "Laud You Made The Night Too Long."

In 1929 Victor Young began his radio career in Chicago, and two years later he moved to New York where he signed an exclusive contract with Decca Records (Brunswick in England) for recordings and broadcasts with Don Ameche's variety show and Al Jolson. In May of 1930, while working with Isham Jones' band, Young and his masterful violin transformed an up-tempo jazz piece by Hoagy Carmichael, "Stardust," into a romantic ballad. The slow, dreamy arrangement of "Stardust" as we know it today can be attributed to Victor Young. "Young not only broadened the song's musical context," Joseph Lanza writes, "but demonstrated how previously entrenched styles could

be liberated" to become something new – something that was neither jazz nor classical.

His 1932 Brunswick Records 78rpm album, containing six selections from Kern and Hammerstein's *Show Boat* with Helen Morgan and Paul Robeson, was the first American album of songs from a Broadway musical.

By 1935 he was one of the best-known music directors in radio, and certainly the best-known arranger, conductor, and accompanist in the record industry. Victor Young and His Orchestra, at one time or other, backed almost every artist who recorded for Decca during Young's lifetime, including recording nearly a hundred sides each with Dick Haymes and Bing Crosby.

In December of 1935, he was offered a contract by Paramount Pictures, and at the beginning of 1936 arrived back in Hollywood to start work on Cole Porter's *Anything Goes* starring Bing Crosby and Ethel Merman. He made several recordings for Edison and, between 1939 and 1940, recorded an album of eight songs from *The Wizard of Oz* for Decca Records. He was so busy as music director that he had no time to write popular songs until 1940, when three movies successfully featured his songs. In 1941 he composed, arranged and conducted the incidental music for Ronald Coleman's famous recording of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

During the 1940s he recorded many of the themes from his movies for commercial release on 78rpm discs. When LPs were first introduced in the early 1950s, many of Young's recordings were released on a series of Decca Records LPs credited to The Victor Young Orchestra and Singing Strings, helping

to shape the genre later known as "easy listening." In addition to 36 or so LPs, Young also released soundtrack albums from such box office hit movies as *The Quiet Man*, *Samson And Delilah*, *Johnny Guitar* and *Around The World In 80 Days*.

Before his death in 1956, Victor Young wrote, conducted or supervised the scoring of some 300 films, from biblical epics to westerns to film noir. When asked why he became a film conductor, Young said, "Why, indeed? Why would any trained musician let himself in for a career that calls for the exactitude of an Einstein, the diplomacy of Churchill, and the patience of a martyr? And yet I can think of no other musical medium that offers as much challenge, excitement and demand for creativity in putting music to work." Young's demanding craft came at a high price, however, and his prodigious output took a physical toll. Young's niece, Bobbie Hill Fromberg, describes his workaholic habits as "horrible." "He worked day and night," she says, "and hardly vacationed at all." His hectic pace of life, poor diet, and cigar smoking contributed to his deterioration. When his doctor told him in 1955 that he had to give up smoking, Young replied, "To hell with that." A year later he was dead.

Even with failing health in his final year, he composed scores for *The Brave One*, *The Buster Keaton Story*, *Omar Khayyam* and *Run Of The Arrow*, all of which were released after his demise. At the time of his death he had been working on Fox's *China Gate* starring Gene Barry and Nat "King" Cole. Max Steiner completed the score, so the music credit read: "Music by Victor Young, extended by his old friend Max Steiner." Young suffered a cerebral hemorrhage on November 9, 1956, and died the following day at his home



VICTOR YOUNG, PUBLICITY PHOTO 1935 (PHOTO: WILLIAM GRAY COLLECTION)

in Desert Hot Springs, California, just 57 years of age.

At Young's funeral, Frank Sinatra, Peggy Lee and Michael Todd (producer of *Around The World In 80 Days*) delivered eulogies. By all accounts, Young was charming, friendly, and well liked, and enormously respected within the film and music industries. His funeral was so well attended that the grounds around the chapel filled with people who listened to the service via loudspeaker. Four months after his death, Elizabeth Taylor accepted Young's posthumous Academy Award, which offered a token of recognition for a man that – according to Bill Stinson, onetime head of the Paramount Studio Music Department – "may have been the best melody writer we ever had in Hollywood."

Cinema Rhapsodies: The Musical Genius of



VICTOR YOUNG, 1947

Victor Young captures but a few of the countless lens-trapped love scenes – on a dusty plain, in an artillery-ripped hospital, in a quiet Irish meadow, in a haunted house – which have endured in the hearts and minds of audiences. The love themes Victor Young composed and scored as background music for these memorable moments have gained an everlasting life of their own, and continue to reach new audiences as the films are reissued or broadcast on television.

Young's music conjures the nostalgia for other times and places in *Around The World In 80 Days*, the raw forbidden love of *Samson And Delilah*, and the

war-shattered yearning of *For Whom The Bell Tolls*. His arrangements, too, are brilliantly evocative, from the cascading strings and subtle exotica of “**India Country Side**” to the austerity and pathos of “**The High And The Mighty**,” Young's biggest hit single of the '50s. “**Around The World (Main Theme from Around The World In 80 Days)**” is a colourful carousel of melody that waltzes its way into the listener's imagination. (“*Around The World*,” the hit single version, makes its stereo debut on this anthology).

Some of Young's most memorable film music includes his percussive Oscar-nominated score for the Spanish Civil War drama *For Whom The Bell Tolls*, based on the novel by Ernest Hemingway and starring Gary Cooper and Ingrid Bergman. (“**Theme from For Whom The Bell Tolls**” sets a lush string melody against bright horns, a pandereta (Spanish tambourine) and an acoustic guitar to give the music its Spanish flavor.

Victor Mature was a beefy Samson and Hedy Lamarr a beguiling Delilah in Cecil B. De Mille's glorious Technicolor biblical drama, *Samson And Delilah* (Paramount 1949). The score Victor Young wrote embodies the film's passion and action. The exotic accents in “(**Themes from) Sampson And Delilah**” evoke, in typical Hollywood style, the time and locale of the story.

Even when scoring a thriller like *The Uninvited* (Paramount 1944), a picture with a supernatural storyline, the love theme was so distinctly beautiful that, due to popular demand, Young re-scored the piece as “**Stella By Starlight**.” It remains one of the loveliest themes in the history of film. Another of his beautiful and haunting melodies is “**My Foolish Heart**” from

the film of the same name. Ned Washington penned the lyrics for both of these songs. “**Love Letters**,” from the 1945 Paramount film starring Jennifer Jones and Joseph Cotton, and “**Golden Earrings**” from the Marlene Dietrich, Ray Milland picture (Paramount 1947), also became evergreens.

The Victor Young Orchestra occasionally charted with non-original compositions, one example of which is the beautiful Edith Piaf composition “**La Vie en Rose**.” Young's arrangement eschews stereotypical “French” accents in favor of soaring massed strings and a delicate harp, emphasizing the romantic melody rather than the song's continental origins.

“**Autumn Leaves**” is another song hit from France, composed by Joseph Kosma with English lyrics by Johnny Mercer. It is a sad tone poem written in 1946 about a lost love in France after WWII, and uses a cascade of notes to invoke the image of falling leaves. “*Autumn Leaves*” appeared on the charts in a half-dozen vocal and instrumental versions in 1955, the most popular of which was Roger Williams' instrumental piano rendition.

Heinz Roemheld composed “**Ruby**” for the lusty Jennifer Jones film *Ruby Gentry*. Like “*Autumn Leaves*,” “*Ruby*” was heard in six hit versions in 1953, as Young's arrangement – led by the quavering wail of a harmonica – went up against recordings by Richard Hayman, Les Baxter, Harry James and others.

Who could ever forget the brooding themes by Leonard Rosenman in James Dean's first CinemaScope blockbuster, *East Of Eden*? Here Victor Young applies his expertise to “**East Of Eden**,” the main theme from that 1955 film of teenage angst in the time of WWI.

Three of Victor Young's compositions appear on

this anthology in recordings by Richard Hayman and His Orchestra: “**Stella By Starlight**,” “**When I Fall in Love**,” and the enchanting “**Love Letters**.” These are three of Young's best-loved melodies, but the original masters of his recordings have not survived. For the sake of including them in high fidelity and in stereo on this definitive collection, we have presented Hayman's performances, which feature arrangements that Victor Young himself would have certainly approved.

Few artists have made a contribution to popular music as profound, generous and lasting as Victor Young. Many of his songs and melodies will endure as long as composed in the 20th Century, and the release of this anthology ensures that his own performances will be enjoyed once again. Cinephiles know that this music is as vibrant and affecting as the images it accompanies on the silver screen, but – as pop music lovers can attest – one need not be a film expert to appreciate the visionary melodies and gorgeous orchestrations of Victor Young.

– Greg Adams & John Adey,
Editor, *Kino Cinema Quarterly*

**Special Thanks to the following
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19. RUBY
20. AUTUMN LEAVES
21. (Theme from) THE MEDIC
22. STELLA BY STARLIGHT



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